

take care that you do not demoralise them in the process. Primary schools on a broad social basis, may be efficient in their literary department, and may be miserably wanting, not only in respect to religion, but in respect to sound moral training."

On this subject we also insert the following correspondence:—

REV. E. RYERSON.—Sir, I was greatly surprised to see, in the *Journal of Education* for August, a notice to the effect that the use of any American geographies will subject the school to the loss of its share of the school fund. I was surprised because I was utterly at a loss to know the reasons for such prohibition. Most certainly every country has the right to prohibit the use of any book in its schools, and no citizen of any other country has the right to call the action in question, still, it may not be wholly improper for a private citizen to ask for the reasons for such action. Will you therefore, if not inconsistent with your duty and the best interests of the cause of popular education in your province, please to inform me why the geographies called American geographies are thus excluded from your schools.

If it is because your own publications are actually better than ours, we will, in Pennsylvania at least, most cheerfully use yours until ours can be so much improved that they will compare favourably with any works of the kind published on this continent.

If ours are immoral in their tendencies, or unsound in their teachings, or false in their statements, we shall be most happy to have the immorality or unsoundness or false statements pointed out, in order that they may be corrected.

Yours truly, CHAS. P. COBURN.
Harrisburgh, Pa., 5th Oct., 1865. State Superintendent

(COPY OF REPLY.)

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th inst., and have much pleasure in complying with your request, stating the reasons, by a section of our school law passed in 1846, why foreign school books, in our English language, are not allowed to be used in our public schools, without the express sanction of the Council of Public Instruction.

The provision of the law in question, though expressed in general terms, applies of course chiefly to school books published in the United States. I cannot better explain to you the reasons for this provision of the law, than by quoting a few sentences from a Special Report which I presented to our Legislature. June, 1847:

"In regard to the exclusion of American books from our schools, I have explained, as I have had opportunity, that it is not because they are foreign books simply that they are excluded, although it is patriotic to use our own in preference to foreign publications; but because they are, with very few exceptions, anti-British, in every sense of the word.

They are unlike the school books of any other enlightened people, so far as I have the means of knowing. The school books of Germany, France, and Great Britain, contain nothing hostile to the institutions or derogatory to the character of any other nation. I know not a single English school book in which there is an allusion to the United States not calculated to excite a feeling of respect for their inhabitants and government. It is not so with American school books. With very few exceptions, they abound in statements and allusions prejudicial to the institutions and character of the British nation. It may be said that such statements and allusions are "few and far between," and exert no injurious influence upon the minds of children and their parents. But surely no school book would be tolerated which should contain statements and allusions, "few and far between," against the character and institutions of our common christianity. And why should books be authorized or used in our schools inveighing against the character and institutions of our common country? And as to the influence of such publications, I believe, though silent and imperceptible in its operations, it is more extensive and powerful than is generally supposed. I believe such books are one element of powerful influence against the established government of the country. From facts which have come to my knowledge, I believe it will be found, on inquiring, that in precisely these parts of Upper Canada where United States school books had been used most extensively, there the spirit of the insurrection, in 1837 and 1838, was most prevalent.

Though impressed with the magnitude of the evil arising from the indiscriminate use of United States books in our schools, I have thought it premature to recommend the enforcement of the law excluding them, until a proper supply of equally cheap, if not cheaper books, recommended by the Board of Education, should be provided. This, I believe, will be done in the course of the current year; and I doubt not but all parties in the Legislature will

agree in the propriety and expediency of using our own books in our own schools."

I may remark that at a National School Convention, held at Philadelphia some ten or twelve years ago, and over the proceedings of which the late venerable Bishop Potter presided, I drew attention to the anti-British peculiarity of your school books, and the unreasonableness of it, and the provisions of our law in consequence of it. The unadvisableness of continuing such a peculiarity in your text-books was admitted by the best educationists in the Convention, and the propriety of correcting it, which, however, has not been done.

I am sure you would not sanction the use of text books in your schools which contained attacks upon and statements and allusions derogatory to your institutions and government.

I have done all in my power to cultivate and inculcate the most liberal and friendly feelings between this country and the United States, and have often been assailed in the public press for my alleged American partialities; but I should be wanting in duty to my own country to encourage, in the education of its youth, the use of books which desparage the government and institutions which it is their duty to respect and support.

I have, &c.,

(Signed),

E. RYERSON.

Education Office, Toronto, 11th Oct., 1865.

2. LOVELL'S SERIES OF SCHOOL BOOKS.

Amongst the successful competitors at the Dublin Exhibition, we are glad to notice the name of Mr. Lovell, to whom has been awarded a silver medal. The award is "for CHEAP and GOOD Educational Works published by him." There is a significance in the terms of the award—good and cheap. They are exactly the requisites of a young country like our own, and the absence of either quality would be fatal. This is not the first occasion on which Mr. Lovell's books have been noticed in Britain. The Jury of the International Exhibition held in London, in 1862, made the following report: "The Colony (Canada) produces many of its own school books, among which may be mentioned 'Lovell's General Geography,' a trustworthy and attractive manual, remarkable for its clear arrangement, and for the fulness of its illustrative and statistical contents." Such verdicts must be highly gratifying to Mr. Lovell; but a more gratifying fact is, that his books are now in general use throughout the Provinces, for which they have been expressly prepared, and are, most of them, sanctioned by the various Councils of Education for use in the schools of the Provinces.—*Montreal Transcript*.

3. UNIFORMITY IN SCHOOL BOOKS IN LOWER CANADA.

According to a late decision of the Council of Public Instruction, none but the books which they have approved are to be used in the academies, model schools, and elementary schools of Lower Canada. After the first July, 1866, the Superintendent will refuse to pay their share of the Government grant to those who have not complied with the order. This decision aims at a most worthy object—that of obtaining both excellency and uniformity in the books for education. Amongst the advantages which the uniformity of school-books will offer is that of economy. Larger editions can be made of the same work, with the certainty of a prompt sale, which enables the publisher to lower the price; and, the extra expense, so unwelcome to parents, frequently incurred by an arbitrary change of books in a school, will no longer be possible. Of course the Council and the Superintendent have no power to enforce this desirable uniformity of books upon the very numerous private schools of our cities. And yet the different set of books adopted in each individual school, to say nothing of the frequent changes ordered by whimsical teachers, constitutes a great nuisance.

The evil might be obviated by a mutual agreement, in a conference of leading city teachers, otherwise they had better allow their choice to be guided by the authoritative decisions of the Council.—*Montreal Witness*.

4. AN UNIQUE FRENCH SCHOOL BOOK.

Among the school books used in France, is one entirely unknown in this country, consisting of fac similes of letters written by business men, eminent people, etc., intended to teach children the art of reading writing, of which there is almost universal ignorance in America. Every variety of hand is selected, beginning with the best, and gradually proceeding to scrawls which puzzle printers and "blind letters" men in post offices.

VII. Papers on Prizes in Schools.

1. MERIT CARDS IN OUR SCHOOLS.

In regard to the system of merit cards which have recently been

* The reason for the exclusion of American Text-books is also given in note † on page 393 of "Eighty Years Progress of British North America."